



### Special points of interest:

- IMT Family Readiness Symposium, March 28-30
- Coping with Stress
- Relook Childcare Funding for FRG Meetings
- Best Practices

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# IMT Family News

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## DCG-IMT Places High Priority on Taking Care of Families

Family Readiness ranks as my number one priority and is essential to the well-being of Soldiers, civilians and Families and overall Army readiness. My focus is to channel existing resources and utilize personal contact and technology to provide Soldiers, Families, and civilians with the means to access Family programs and services within a comprehensive environment.

Since the implementation of the IMT Soldier, Civilian and Family Campaign Plan 11-12 on Oct. 3, 2011, my team has worked hard to address many of the areas identified that require im-

provement. One of those areas is harnessing technology to increase communication flow. We have already seen an increased usage of our social media among the Family Readiness Groups for networking and disseminating of information. Now, I am pleased to share with you that our new IMT Family Readiness Website will launch Jan. 13.

My goal is to employ venues to keep cadres, Family members, and Department of the Army civilians abreast of changes that impact their quality of life and promote well-being throughout IMT.



Photo Credit U.S. Army

## Army Leaders Reemphasize Support for Military Families

Army leadership renewed the Army Family Covenant (AFC) during the Association of United States Army (AUSA) Annual Meeting and Exposition held October 2010 in Washington, D.C. On Oct. 8, 2007, the Army revealed this important document to commit to providing Soldiers and Families (active duty, Guard, and Reserve) a quality of life that is commensurate to their level of service to the Nation. Through AFC, the Army commits to standardizing family programs, and services; increasing accessibility to health care; improved housing; excellence in youth and child and



Photo Credit AUSA

school services programs, and more educational and employment opportunities for family members.



**Beverly A. Nicholson**  
Family Readiness  
Program Manager

## Family Readiness Program Initiatives

Here are some of the initiatives that have been implemented.

1. Established bimonthly teleconference calls with the Brigade Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leaders/Advisors to disseminate information, discuss Best Practices, and network. Ten Brigade FRG Leaders/Advisors participated during the first one on Oct. 14 and
2. Utilized social media to provide more opportunities to communicate.
3. Created an IMT Family Readiness Quarterly Newsletter that can be disseminated to the Brigade Commanders and throughout IMT. This issue is the first one.
4. Developed and launched the IMT Family Readiness Website on Jan. 13 which links to the IMT official homepage.
5. Started working on ways to conduct trainings using Defense Connect Online, Adobe Connect or gotomeetings.com in addition to video-teleconferences.

**“Family Readiness Symposium offers value-added information to inspire FRG leaders/advisors and will enhance the dynamic work that they are doing.”**

## IMT Family Readiness Symposium, March 28-30

In conjunction with the Initial Military Training Conference, the Family Readiness Symposium is scheduled for March 28-30, at the Doubletree Hotel in San Antonio, TX.

Topics include an update on Army Community Service programs and services and how we can work together, IMT family readiness

program initiatives, incorporating Master Resiliency Training into special events, designing programs and events that WOW, new ways to utilize social media, taking care of yourself while taking care of others, recognizing volunteers throughout the year, sharing Best Practices and plenty of opportunities to network.

Spouses of brigade commanders, Command Sergeants Major and Family Readiness Support Assistants are invited.

Visit the IMT Family Readiness website for more information: <http://tradoc2.army.mil/dcgimt/imt-fr.htm> or contact the program manager at 757-501-7056.



**FRG Leaders/Advisors**  
networking and  
disseminating  
information

## Upcoming FY'12 FRG Leaders/Advisors Teleconferences

Because of the success of the first FRG Leaders/Advisors and FRSAs' Teleconference Call held in October 2011, participants agreed to have bimonthly meetings starting in February 2012. The teleconference call provided a way of sharing resources and networking while in a user-friendly environment that allowed them to

perform their daily tasks while engaging on the call. Some individuals were cooking lunch for their military spouses, others were completing household chores or listening while traveling to a meeting. Others expressed their appreciation for the ability to contribute wherever they were since the majority are volunteers.

Future teleconference calls are scheduled for Feb. 2, April 26, June 7, Aug. 2, and Nov. 1 from 10:30 a.m. to noon, EST. This is a perfect time to share concerns, Best Practices and network. Teleconference calls are only open to brigade and battalion FRG leaders/advisors and FRSAs.

## Coping with Stress

For many people, stress tends to escalate following the holidays; especially when the bills are due from extensive shopping; returning to a normal routine after spending a great time with family and friends and enjoying all of the festivities; and dealing with the memories of loved ones or friends whose lives ceased. Sometimes just talking to someone can provide a different

perspective on a situation and produce hope.

Here are some resources that can help individuals get through the winter blues and cope with stress.

- Free Counseling at Military One Source, [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)
- Visit the Chaplain at your nearest installation
- Contact the nearest Army Community

Service Center for a variety of services including financial, counseling, emergency assistance, and referrals.

- Talk with a friend
- Begin keeping a journal and write down your thoughts daily
- Take a walk or start an exercise routine; but check with your doctor first before beginning.



Need to Talk with Someone?

## Relooking Child Care Funds for FRG Meetings

Installation Management Command (IMCOM) G-9 (Department of the Army Headquarters) has eliminated child care funding indefinitely. This is as a result of the low usage of child care funds to participate in official FRG meetings in previous years and current budgetary constraints.

IMCOM is finalizing its Fiscal Year 12 Funding Guid-

ance Narrative which will clarify Army Family Covenant (AFC) funding for this fiscal year. Thus, Army Community Service does not have funds to pay for child care during official FRG meetings.

As an alternative, unit commanders can use appropriated funds to pay for child care for official FRG meetings. For more guid-

ance, refer to the Army Regulation for Army Community Service, AR 608-1, Appendix J-4(b)(2).

Also, check with your local Army Community Service Center for the status of the FY12 Funding Guidance.

***“Because of current budgetary constraints and low usage of child care funds in previous years, funds are being eliminated.”***

## The Federal Employment Education and Assistance Fund

Department of the Army civilians who need emergency assistance can apply for no-interest loans of up to \$1,000. Hardships include loss of income, death of loved one in the immediate family, leave without pay due to severe illness and unable to work or family-member illness; family separation or divorce, and more. Employ-

ees should complete the emergency assistance application and follow the instructions for either mailing or faxing the application and all supporting information. Loan checks are made payable to the specific creditor the employee is behind in paying. Loans are repaid through payroll allotment administered by the employee's payroll service, e.g.

Employee Express, My Pay, NFC or Postal Ease. Loans are generally repaid within a year. Visit <http://www.feea.org/programs/emergency-assistance>. Assistance is performed on a case-by-case. Please note: in order to receive a loan, applicant must have been employed with the federal government for one year or longer."





Check out websites offering scholarship information

## 2012 Scholarships for Military Families—Apply Now!

Here is a list of several organizations offering scholarships for military Families. For deadlines and eligibility, visit the websites listed below.

- Defense Commissary Agency worldwide are accepting applications now. Visit [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)
- Fisher House Foundation Scholarship <http://www.militaryscholar.org>
- Army Emergency Relief: MG James Ursano Scholarship Program, <http://www.aerhq.org/dnn563/EducationalAssistance/DependentChildren.aspx>
- NASA Space Camp Scholarships: [www.militarychild.org/child-student/space-camp-scholarship](http://www.militarychild.org/child-student/space-camp-scholarship)
- Veterans Affairs Spouse and Dependents Education Assistance Program
- Visit Association of United States Army website for a list of scholarships: <http://www3.ousa.org/webpub/deptfamilyprograms.nsf/byid/kcat-6dkmq>
- Visit the IMT Family Readiness website at <http://tradoc2.army.mil/dcgimt/imt-fr.htm> for additional ones

**“Share some of the wonderful things that your Family Readiness Groups are doing”**

## Bragging Rights: What Makes Your Brigade Special?

Share the wonderful accomplishments that make your Family Readiness Program special on the IMT Family Readiness Website. Space is provided to feature a brigade monthly. Submissions can include Best Practices, a FRG leader/advisor, military spouse participating in a special event or something spectacular that your

organization did.

Submissions can be pictures and a brief article less than 100 words explaining the event and outcome. Visit the IMT Family Readiness Website at <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/dcgimt/IMT-FR.htm> to information. Click on the ASK NOW box under Questions/Contact Us.

Information must be sent to the IMT Family Readiness Program website by the fifth of the month for approval and inclusion on the website. Because of limited space, if the submission will not be utilized on the next website update, it will be saved for future ones. Pictures will also be included on IMT social media.



A Mentor and A Friend

## Spouse Mentorship Volunteer Mentors Needed

Command Team Spouse Development Program provides opportunities for recent spouses of a Brigade Commander (CDR) or Brigade Command Sergeants Major's (CSM) or Battalion CDR or Battalion CSM to participate in free training funded by the School of Command Preparation at Fort Leavenworth, KS. This five-day training includes materials and several occasions to share experiences during group discussions. Attendees

will also participate on panels. However, no formal presentation is required.

Future classes for FY 12 are scheduled for Feb. 12-Mar 12; Mar. 18-23; Apr. 8-12; Apr. 29-May 4; June 10-15; July 8-13; Jul 29-Aug. 12; and Sep. 9-14. Application packet will need to be submitted one month before date selected to attend.

For a copy of the Mentor's Handbook, an application

packet, administrative details, course syllabus, contact your unit FRG leader or the IMT Family Readiness at the IMT Family Readiness Website under by clicking on the ASK NOW box under Questions/Contact Us or call (757) 501-7056.



## Best Practices: Incorporating Master Resiliency Training

Mrs. Kim Milano, the first lady of U.S. Army Training Center (ATC), Fort Jackson, SC, along with the ATC Family Readiness Groups, have discovered some creative ways to incorporate Master Resiliency Training (MRT) into special events. Although family members recognize the need for the three-day training, they revealed that it is too long and time-consuming to fit into their

already busy schedules. Many stated that they cannot get away from their daily tasks because of full-time employment or they are stay-at-home parents.

Mrs. Milano wrote on the IMT Spouses Strong! Facebook account, "We also have had difficulty getting spouses to come to training so [we] have started to incorporate it into other events with some success, doing two or three skills at a

time so it isn't so long. Examples of other events include, spouses conference (huge success - about 70 people), Strong Bonds, unit offsites, etc."

Other FRG leaders and FRSAs also mentioned that their groups have moved to a similar format and participation has improved. MRT is one of the four pillars of the Comprehensive Fitness Program that teaches resiliency skills. MRT covers self



**MRT—Skills to Bounce Back**

-awareness, energy management, problem-solving, identifying strengths, communication, and putting things in the right perspective. Visit <http://csf.army.mil/>

## Best Practice: Using Social Media

Mrs. Jan MacWatters, a FRG Leader at Fort Benning, shared how her FRG group is utilizing social media. "Diigo," social bookmarking site, allows notes from meetings, conferences, Powerpoints slides, etc. to be shared with anyone. According to Mrs. MacWatters, this idea was set up as part of the

spouses project at the War College last year.

The original intent was to create an ongoing and hopefully growing resource for the family members of deployed soldiers whose family members were not located near a military installation to access information. However, the same concept could be used to create a list of useful

websites that are relevant to family training, promoting resiliency or to a variety of topics.

Social bookmarking is easy to update regularly. It is also a great way of allowing people to share. For more information about Diigo, visit <http://www.diigo.com>.

**"Social bookmarking is easy to update regularly," according to Jan MacWatters, FRG Leader**

## TRADOC Mid-level Army Family Action Plan Conference

Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Mid-level Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Conference is tentatively scheduled for May-June 2012, in the Hampton Roads Area, in Virginia. Volunteers are needed to serve as facilitators, recorders, issue support person, room monitors and delegates. To participate or for

more information, please contact your local Army Community Service Center.

AFAP is a grassroots process for addressing quality-of-life issues. It begins with the solicitation of quality-of-issues at the installation level. Delegates representing all segments of the population of the local installation address these quality-of-life issues during a

forum or conference. During the conference, delegates select issues to present to the brief to the Army leadership for resolution. Those issues that cannot be resolved at the local level will be forwarded to the major command for resolution. For more information, visit [www.myarmyonesource.com](http://www.myarmyonesource.com).



**AFAP Logo**

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## IMT Promotes Financial Readiness

The Initial Military Training Center of Excellence directs the transformation of volunteers into Soldiers; ensures the conduct of relevant, rigorous, and appropriately standardized training; assists IMT brigades by improving the quality of life and resiliency of IMT cadre, Families, and civilians through resource allocation and manning; in order to ensure that our Soldiers are prepared to contribute as a leader/member of a team upon arrival at their first unit of assignment.

## Upcoming Events

- 2012 Family Readiness Group Leaders/Advisors Teleconference Call, February 2, April 26, June 7, Aug. 2, and Nov. 1.
- Department of the Army Family Action Plan Conference, Feb. 27– 2 Mar., Washington, DC area
- IMT Family Readiness Symposium, March 28-



**Mark Your Calendar!**

30, Doubletree Hotel,  
San Antonio, TX  
(postponed)

- National Volunteer Appreciation Week, Apr. 15-21
- TRADOC Army Family Action Plan Conference, Hampton Roads Area, VA, May-June timeframe

## Tidbit: The Power of Sleep

According to the National Sleep Foundation,

- 40 million Americans may have sleep problems
- 22% are late to work or school due to sleepiness
- 40% sleep at work or school at least 2 days a week
- Problems are worst in 18-29 age group

The TRADOC Civilian Health and Resiliency Program sponsored a wonderful program about the power of sleep last year. To view the Powerpoint Slides, visit the IMT Family Readiness Website and click on Resources.



**Getting Enough Sleep?**